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his treatment of culture theory and urban political theories, as well as traditional urban studies literature, disappointingly shallow. Also, readers easily agitated by technical flaws should be forewarned that the text is not free from grammatical errors and that the maps, although generally pleasing, include an occasional cartographic mistake.

In the final analysis, however, the book is laudable and worth reading. Flaws and all, it offers not merely an entertaining look at Atlanta but an accessible cultural guidebook for the emerging North American city. *Imagineering Atlanta* creates a challenging framework from which a patient reader can rescue pertinent details from the minutiae of Atlanta's history and reestablish connections. Perhaps the most telling historical detail of this entire story is one that Rutheiser did not yet have access to at publication date: the bombing of Olympic Centennial Park. The tragedy brings to mind Davis's (1992) chilling conclusion that escalating violence, including easily constructed bombs of the sort used at the Olympics, may not be as random as the media present. Instead, one may be witnessing the next weapon of choice in the ongoing battle over urban space. And after reading the full story of Olympic organizers' contemptuous relationship with the city in the context of long-term uneven development and overt racism, one is surprised only that more bombs were not used. Books such as *Imagineering Atlanta* offer encouragement that the quest to understand urban problems really is worthwhile.

—Stacy Warren
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Robert F. Pecorella, *Community Power in a Postreform City: Politics in New York City* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 232 pp., \$54.95 (cloth).

New York City politics present an unusually challenging task for the analyst because of the city's size and complexity. Some scholars have

provided detailed microanalyses of the city's ethnic communities such as Canarsie, Chinatown, and Harlem. Others have emphasized the city's international and local financial interests. In examining the financial interests, Wall Street and Manhattan come to the fore, and the ethnic politics of the outer boroughs is pushed to the background.

Pecorella successfully bridges these approaches and makes a theoretical contribution in the process. In the introductory chapter, he "presents a contextual approach to urban politics that suggests that periodic fiscal crises have resulted in regime changes in New York's governance" (p. 3). He reviews traditional approaches to the study of urban politics: pluralist, stratificationist, and statist. These approaches are found wanting, particularly in explaining New York City politics since the 1975 fiscal crisis. He uses a contextual approach to focus "on how changes in the socioeconomic conditions around cities interact with local political developments to shape urban policy over time" (p. 14). Pecorella is especially concerned with the interaction of fiscal crisis and urban political change in the formation of urban regimes. In his interpretation, New York City, since 1871, has had three political regimes: machine, reform, and postreform.

In the second chapter, Pecorella traces the historical evolution of the machine and reform regimes. The machine era developed after a financier's strike in 1871 and the financial panic of 1873. The machine regime combined functional centralization with geographical decentralization. Although there had been sporadic reform efforts and mayoralties, the reform regime did not emerge until the Great Depression of the 1930s. The reform regime increased professionalism in city government, and community was de-emphasized. There was less opportunity for residents of lower-income communities to have an impact on bureaucracies.

Pecorella's third chapter presents the concept of postreform politics, and he examines its historical antecedents. He discusses such values as decentralization and participation, distinguishing between political and administrative decentralization. He reviews the roots of postreform politics, including grassroots organizing, the black power and community control movements of the 1960s, and federal government participation initiatives in Great Society programs such as the War on Poverty and Model Cities. In review, Pecorella stresses two primary values of postreform politics: that there is no overarching unitary public interest in urban politics and that community politics deserved a place on the urban agenda.

The development of postreform politics in New York City is traced in chapter 4. Pecorella discusses such grassroots organizing efforts as community development corporations and self-help groups. He also analyzes two early postreform experiments: school decentralization in the late 1960s and

the Office of Neighborhood Government, which was organized during Mayor John Lindsay's administration in 1971.

Pecorella addresses the fiscal crisis of New York City in the 1970s, including the loss of home rule and fiscal autonomy, in the fifth chapter. Along with the cutback management practiced by fiscal control boards, the city established community boards in 1975. Thus the new postreform regime increased citizen involvement at the same time that it institutionalized the influence of quasi-public agencies such as the fiscal control bodies.

The heart of Pecorella's analysis emerges in chapters 6 and 7. He evaluates community board effectiveness in three main areas: land use, budget, and service delivery. Community boards opened up the land-use process, and the Department of City Planning and City Planning Commission basically followed community board recommendations. Pecorella's detailed analysis of the community boards and the capital-budget process found that boards from middle- and upper-income districts were more successful than those in lower income areas in having their proposals included in the capital budget. In assessing service delivery, the district service cabinets established by the 1975 charter have never been able to achieve the coordination envisioned by the framers.

Pecorella reports the results of a survey of community board members in chapter 7. The results indicate that decentralization receives mixed reviews from community board members. Board members were more likely to favor community control over land-use and service issues than over budget priorities. Attitudes differed substantially because of race. African-American board members, for example, were more likely to favor community control in all areas.

Overall, the postreform regime has introduced a good deal of integrative decentralization. Pecorella concludes that "through the community board system, the postreform regime has not only changed legitimation rules in the city, it has also expanded the number and diversified the interests of the players" (p. 194). Neither critics nor fervent supporters are pleased with the results.

In presenting this subtle and sophisticated analysis of New York City politics, Pecorella has added substantially to the growing body of work in urban regime theory. The book is highly suitable for graduate seminar classes. I recommend it to scholars in urban politics and urban planning.

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